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Guidelines for Special Education Instruction in the Missouri Reading First Initiative

The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, Division of Special Education, provides the following guidelines for Special Education Instruction in the Missouri Reading First Initiative:

* The Division of Special Education is committed to the Reading First Initiative in Missouri as it will improve the reading achievement of all students. One of the Division's performance goals, "The percentage of students with disabilities in Grade 3 and 7 who are proficient readers will increase," should be positively affected by the combined team efforts in Reading First. In an effort to support this partnership, it is the Division's intent to provide maximum flexibility in operational and funding guidelines for Reading First schools while still adhering to federal and state special education regulations implementing the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act.

* The IEP takes precedence over Reading First Grant guidelines. Each student is a unique individual and IEPs are developed to address their varying needs. Reading First is a research-based reading program with many prospective benefits for students with special needs. The amount of specialized instruction in reading provided for in the child's IEP needs to be considered. The IEP team of K-3 students with an IEP for specialized instruction in reading should consider the following options:

- 1) Can the student be successful in the 90 minute block without additional support? (no specialized instruction written in the IEP)
- 2) Can the student be successful in the 90 minute block with additional specialized instruction? (specialized instruction minutes and services will be included on the IEP)
- 3) If the student can not be successful in the 90 minute block with support, the IEP team will design an appropriate program for reading instruction.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: Can special education teachers co-teach or work in classrooms without identified IEP students?

A: NO. There must be at least one identified IEP student in the classroom in which they are co-teaching.

Q: Can a student receive 90 minutes support in the regular classroom and /or Tier II and Tier III instruction?

A: YES, based on individualized needs.

Q: Can a student be Tier III and not be in special education?

A: YES, Tier III is designed for intensive intervention for any student.

Q: Do students with IEPs automatically receive Tier II and Tier III reading instruction?

A: NO, the IEP team determines adequate amount of time and type of instruction. This specialized instruction can be provided by Reading First Staff, Title I, Special Education Staff, Administrator, etc.

Q: If the child does not have a diagnosed learning disability in reading or written expression, can the IEP team exempt the student from the 90 minute block?

A: NO, it is a general education program for ALL students.